

# うちのおメイド 不定歩彩

著・静川龍宗  
原案・森瀬敏  
イラスト・文倉十





著・静川龍宗  
原案・森瀬綾  
イラスト・文倉十

# うちねえの 不定形 カッパ



スマッシュ文庫

# Uchi no Meido wa Futeikei - Volume 01-02 (Incomplete)

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# Chapter 1: The Formless Maid Cometh! Iä! Iä! Iä!

## Epigraph[\[edit\]](#)

The sounds of the giant birds pursued the two through the passage. "Tekeli-li! Tekeli-li!" they cried. "Tekeli-li!"

H.P. Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*[\[1\]](#)

# Chapter I. The Formless Maid Cometh! Ia! Ia! Ia![\[edit\]](#)

For better or for worse, in exactly three minutes my life had just taken a dramatic turn.

"You... you are *our* Master, are you not?"

The voice echoed like a flute from my bath, which I had thought was unoccupied. Before I could react, my neck was being gently, yet forcefully gripped by two long arms coming out of the bathtub.

"How we've waited to meet you, Master! You are our first Master in 155,000,000 years!"

Suddenly, the face of a cute girl emerged, coming so close to my own that our noses were nearly touching. Her glimmering eyes peered intently at my face. Her eyes were an emerald green that would have gotten me quite interested in any other situation.

"You have come! From countless eternities beneath the frozen soil, we have awaited your arrival! Let us stay together indefinitely!"

The girl, on the verge of tears, with all the earnesty of a dog encountering its long-lost owner, snuggled her cheeks against mine over and over. I struggled beneath the weight of this unusually powerful girl's arms, and was unable to move. The phrase "there was nothing I could have done" floated involuntarily through my head.

My name is Tooru Araizawa. Every day, I leave my home in Tokyo's Ninagawa Ward and go to Misukawa Private School, where I am a 10th grader. Living alone at this age has given me a bad habit of excess reading. Other than those non-standard features, I'm a pretty ordinary student. I plan to become a civil servant after graduating and preserve my ordinary lifestyle.

How many things can you do in three minutes?

1/20th of an hour, 180 seconds. The second hand goes around three times. For example, most of the instant ramen sold at supermarkets and convenience stores takes three minutes to go from raw to cooked.

Light travels 300,000 kilometers per second. In 3 minutes, therefore, light can travel 54 million kilometers. It's hard to plop an image of that into your head, but the distance from Earth to Mars, for comparison, is about 54 million kilometers.

Only three minutes. But at the same time, three minutes.

From today to tomorrow, tomorrow to the next day, things don't change from day to day, but in three minutes everything can change dramatically. For example, what occurred in my body on this day.

"Oi oi oi, calm down, *fraülein!*"

Why *fraülein?*, I asked myself, surprised. I must have panicked.

"Okay, okay, I understand your feelings. You've been waiting a hundred million years or whatever, but I understand so please let go of me!"

With a reluctant air, the girl released her hands from my throat.

Emerald green. That was my first impression of her. It wasn't just the color of her eyes-- her hair, the touch of which confirmed through physical contact the mess I had come into, was also a vibrant, glossy green. And above all, the one-piece she was dressed in was the color of her eyes, like a forest floor.

And one more thing. Her lace-rimmed hat, the pure white French cuffs on her sleeves, and the frilled apron covering her chest, made her occupation as clear as any story. That's right -- it was unmistakable. This uniform was the working uniform of a servant in a 19th century upper class Victorian British home, that is, a maid uniform!

I'd seen it on TV and in manga, but this was my first time seeing it in person.

"Are you a... maid?"

That was my first time meeting Tekeli-chan.

\*  
\*\*

Let's wind the clock back about thirty minutes.

It was the first day of Japan's only vacation week, in early May. My sole objective for Golden Week was to get through the unread books I had verheffend [Dutch: "piled up"]. Embracing the rush of exhaustion after an all-

night spree spent reading the Norwegian private eye Sigerson's travelogue of the Himalayas, I coveted a respite in my warm futon. I would have been pleased to drift into dreamland without further interruption, but the untimely sound of the doorbell forbade such luxury.

Arising bleary-eyed, I could not say I was in the best of humor. But when I opened the door to the sight of a deliveryman panting while shifting the weight of a large crate against his chest, I was unable to maintain my sullen expression.

"Sign here... great, thanks." The deliveryman lowered the heavy-looking crate to the ground and walked away, revealing on his back a logo not often seen in my neighborhood. During Golden Week, only a truly reckless person would request that the shipping company deliver a package in the early morning. But when I saw that it was an international package, there was no need to confirm the sender.

"...dammit, Dad, you woke me up on purpose, didn't you."

Just in case, I examined the origin address, and saw the name "Fremantle". An Australian town, where packages from Japan's Antarctic base passed through.

"Let's see..." I examined the box. It was the size of a large airplane carry-on and covered in "Keep Cold" stickers. I undid the tie and cut open the packaging with an Exacto knife.

As the package fell open, I felt a blast of cool air. On top of an enormous ice pack, the words "To My Son" were scribbled in disagreeable handwriting on an envelope, which I swiftly enshrined in a plastic bag. If I'm going to be encountering something that dredges up ill feelings from the cockles of my heart, preparation like this was essential. I let out a deep sigh. I'd been burdened with packages like this before, and generally, when I didn't deal with them quickly, something bad was bound to happen.

For example... no, let's not go there.

Removing the letter from the plastic bag -- which was written not on any sort of stationery, but on something that looked like a page out of a field notebook -- I opened up, and read a short, simple message. Or, rather, a command.

Dear son, here is a present from your father.



Place the contents in hot water for three minutes.

Your father is always watching you.

I wanted to dispose of the letter after the "Dear Son" but that was impossible. The "your father is always watching" line meant that if I didn't do as ordered, I wouldn't be able to count on my weekly allowance. This I knew from long experience.

No more allowance meant a lot to a minor, who was unable to seek part-time employment to cover his daily living expenses. In fact, it's the worst kind of threat I could receive.

My future plan was simple. I couldn't care less about Dad's reputation as a world-famous archaeologist, but I aim to escape economic servitude to his inept personality, and achieve a peaceful life employed as a civil servant.

To achieve that goal, there was only one option available to me at the moment. I must follow my father's incomprehensible orders. Ages ago, I figured out what the consequences were for asking, "what?" or "why?"

*The sink is too small. I'll have to carry it to the tub.* Heaving a big sigh, I violently stuffed my father's letter into my pocket, and put my strength into lifting the crate.

"...This thing is heavy!!"

It was about as heavy as a person, and I couldn't lift the whole thing myself. Four sacks of rice -- roughly 40 kilos. [\[metric 1\]](#)

Somehow I carried the crate into the tub. Time to see what exactly these precious contents were.

I removed the ice pack from the crate, and encountered... what appeared at first glance to be... [a large rice cake](#).

Before my eyes was an enormous agglomeration of "something", an ovaloid about 80 centimeters [\[metric 2\]](#) in diameter.

I lightly touched the face covered in frost, and it responded to my fingers with stiff but gummy wobbling. Below the frost was a mixture of green and black, with spots of red and yellow mixed in. Where the light hit it, I could see various

bright colors -- to be poetic, iridescence. To be somewhat less poetic, it gave me the impression of a film of gasoline on stagnant water.

Deciding I was as ready as I'd ever be, I turned on the hot water over this Mysterious Substance X. I turned the taps to the heat of the human body.

The covering of frost which had given the object its white appearance melted away under the hot water, and the iridescent sparkling increased. A nasty chill went down my spine.

Feeling somewhat grossed out, I turned off the tap and put the cover over the bathtub as soon as the hot water reached the rim. Now, I had to wait three minutes. Whatever was going to come out of this, I thought, it would certainly not be anything decent. This was the extent of my thoughts.

Thud!!

A loud crack interrupted my contemplation. It was like a hammer hitting wood or something, and it was right near me.

Thud! Kkrrrk -- krrk -- krrrdrrd --!!

The sound went from cracking to scratching. Now it had transformed into a dull sound like wood getting dented. The source, obviously, was inside my bathtub.

Dddddddddd!!

Place the contents in hot water for three minutes.

And so exactly three minutes went by. At that instant, the din vanished, and the room became so silent it made me doubt my memory. The bathroom area was blanketed in silence.

Gulp. The sound of me swallowing echoed in my ears.

Nothing was flying out of the tub, and I didn't hear anything inside it.

Well, I couldn't just sit there like an idiot. Whether standing before an unknown door, or faced with a fruit of unknown taste at the supermarket, the human thing to do was to do what I did next.

Knock on it.

"Knock-knock, who's there?"

Taking care not to make a big sound, I lightly rapped on the bathtub cover.

"Hello, welcome to Japan. Anyone in there?"

I carried on the joke pointlessly, but there was no reply. One thing left to do.

"Guess I've got to see for myself!"

Carefully, carefully... With the pointer finger of my left hand, I lifted up the lid of the bathtub ever so slightly. But there were no toxic smells assaulting my nostrils. Having expected something horrid, I breathed a sigh of relief. But this was no time for carelessness. This was, after all, a "present" from Father.

Squeezing my eyes shut, I flung open the lid.

And:

"You... you are *our* Master, are you not?"

In other words, that brings us up to speed.



*In other words, that brings us  
up to speed.*

"Are you a... maid?"

I deserved a big question mark on top of my head to accompany such a manga-esque expression. But now the girl, who had been radiating joy, suddenly looked ill at ease.

*Thump-thump.* My heart fluttered at the sight of such a quickly changing face. The girl, who looked a bit older than me, had big, round, amiable eyes that looked ready to droop down, and her slightly developed lips betrayed an older sister kind of quality. In short, I fancied her.

"Um, uh... does our outfit not suit your tastes?"

Who was this "we"? This girl used the plural form to refer to herself. I liked it, but it was a little off. Although, of the two of us, I'm surely the more confused one.

"No, there's nothing weird about it! It's, uh, a very nice maid outfit."

"Yes... in our preparations to serve a human master, we spared no effort in our embodiment, and we were informed of the ancient grace of this traditional costume!"

My heart fluttered, and I shook a little. I wonder why?

"Co... co-su-chuu-mu..."

Someone was passing this girl bad information. I had a feeling I knew who it was, and felt ashamed to be of the same blood with the perpetrator.

"Uhm, well, let's leave that as it is for now. How about you get out of the bath before your costume gets wet?"

I was totally bewildered and wasn't really sure what I was saying. At any rate, I was really thinking a body that was able to reach out and grab me from its position in the bathtub across the room must actually be quite soft. The image of a body stretched out like rubber flew before my eyes for a second, causing me to panic and deny it.

"Dear, dear, how improper of us. We are very sorry. In our eagerness to be of service after 1,550,000 years, we leapt out before having 'formed'... please wait a little while longer."

Although I had just heard a turn of phrase which was difficult to ignore, the unnatural phenomenon which unfolded before my eyes completely subsumed my powers of comprehension. As I watched, the maid summoned up her energy with a deep breath, and put her hands to her chest in a pose like prayer.

Dgg!! Ggaa!! Bk--!!

The noise from before was again hitting my ears. At that time, ripples like waves appeared around her chest, and spread outward to cover her entire body. I wasn't sure if I believed what I was seeing.

Soon enough, the sounds settled down, and the emerald green eyes opened and turned to face me with a pure, childlike smile.

"Thank you for waiting. Our name, to render it in the human vocal range, is 'Tekeli-li-teketeke-li-lu-tekeli-teke-li-la-lu-la-tekeli-teke-tekeli-li-lu-la-li-tekeli-li'. Your father, who shipped us from the Antarctic so that we might serve you, called us 'Miss Tekeli'. You are welcome to do so as well, Master."

Miss Tekeli.

The girl by that name bowed silently and reverently towards me.

At last, the lower half of her body had entered my sphere of vision. The one-piece dress ran down to her ankles, where it met a pair of black stockings.

As far as unusual experiences went, today was definitely one that tested the limits of what was possible in any place or time.

In my head, the limited amount of experience and knowledge I had collected as a tenth grader presented itself as a short list of commands, which I, the player, needed to choose from.

- BOLDLY CONFRONT
- RUN AWAY
- MAKE A NOTE
- TALK

When taking the reckless first option, I would usually have saved first, but that was not an option here. The second option was the same.

The third option would probably cause some sort of new developments, but I had a feeling it was a dead-end course. "Oh, this horrifying, blasphemous vision creeps steadily towards me. Its macabre, formless tentacles entangle themselves around my feet, and already do I feel myself being pulled into the unseen darkness. The end is near for me, but I pray someone might see this letter..." and a letter like that would be found in an empty house.

If there were multiple scenarios, the number of options might increase upon replay, but in an actual human life, there was no save point or reset button.

To recap, an ovaloid substance sent to me by my father, after I added hot water, became a girl in a maid uniform. Her attitude was friendly, and she presented no danger to me.

Even in such an unusual situation, there was only one conviction I have. That is, this was all the work of my father. The mental security of that conviction caused me to calm down a little.

In my peaceful everyday life, there was only one unusual circumstance—a stain, if you will. That was my father, and all the various dangerous happenings that surrounded him. But up until now, none of those occurrences had put me in physical danger. This much was certain.

I chose the fourth option. This self-proclaimed Miss Tekeli seemed capable of basic conversation in Japanese, and they do say, "talk it out and you'll understand." Although I guess the people who said stuff like that are dead now.

"Well, now that you're here, let's go talk in, errrm, the living room!"

"Okay!"

Having a straight talk with this happy-looking girl seemed like it would have some destructive power. My heart pounded.

I'd forgotten something essential. In the Araizawa clan, our greatest weakness is our complete lack of cleanliness.

Leaving the bathroom for the kitchen, one passes through the living room. But to get there, you must walk a fine line as precipitous as a cliff.

Let's explain a little more about this dreadful sight.

First, a mountain of dirty dishes waited to be fed into the dishwasher in the neighboring room. Surrounding this were used-up packages of instant curry and other pre-processed food products. Alongside the bundles of old newspapers and junk mail, a collection of magazine back numbers was being built up between the living room and the doorway. And all of the unread hardcover and softcover new editions that carefully surrounded all of this junk allowed me easy access to whatever I pleased.

It's not so much a house as a storeroom -- or what one might refer to as a "jungle".

Miss Tekeli observed the situation, clucking her tongue.

"Your father's room in the Antarctic was something, but Master's house is even more. When it comes to cleaning, you're just like your father, Master."

"It's not so much uncleanliness. I've got everything I need on hand, I just haven't arranged it well enough. Do things when they need to get done, right? So--"

*So don't compare me to my father!* I wanted to say, but those words wouldn't come out.

"--so I was thinking this week would be the perfect time to clean up," I heard myself saying. "And I was planning to do it today, but then your package arrived..."

Now I'm just making excuses. I have no obstacles in my life, so my room's a mess. There's a big difference between "dirty" and "messy".

When I call over friends, they don't seem to come back afterwards, but I prefer it that way.

Even so, it's not something that I could just calmly show to a girl. Her true colors were not yet clear, but this girl was quite cute -- and it was mentally bearable for me, for her to know my shameful side.

"Master. With your permission, could we be allowed to clean this room as our first duty? That is what we came here for, after all. Please, by all means leave it to us! Service is our highest priority!"

Miss Tekeli clapped her hands together with the force of a pro batter.

"Master." "Service." "First duty." In other words, as her appearance implied, Father had sent me a "maid" -- I had been bestowed with an assistant.

Father's intentions aside, to have this suddenly arrived guest -- whatever the details were, this girl was still a "guest" in my house -- to have this guest demand to clean my room was ridiculous. I opened my mouth to object, but she was faster.

"We'll take care of the first floor, so please retire to the second floor and relax, Master."

The fast-talking Miss Tekeli spun me around with surprising force and compelled me physically to the bottom of the staircase.

Her undeniable power withstood objections, and I was forced to allow my guest to clean my room. I couldn't say I was totally disappointed.

Glad to be leaving the first floor behind, I took a last look at the packages and trash strewn around the floor before heading up the stairs to my room. I managed to keep the area around my bunk bed clean, but otherwise, this room was not hugely different from the first floor. I carefully maneuvered through the room, and reached for my cell phone on the desk -- then stopped. I had half a mind to call my father who had arranged this surprise and interrogate him about this girl, but in the end, my feelings for Miss Tekeli won out by far.

My heart leaping with intellectual excitement, I turned around to face the stairs. A maid of unclear identity, venturing into an unmapped jungle! Would she be able to penetrate those most secluded regions?

Slowly and quietly, as if to peek in on the swan-maiden at her weaving,<sup>[2]</sup> I tiptoed back to the stairs... and, seeing an unimaginable scene, was at a loss for words. By some inconceivable means, in the mere space of me going up the staircase, the packages and trash had disappeared entirely. What's more, both the stairway and the floor were sparking clean.

Peering into the living room, I saw an even more surprising scene. I almost wanted to blurt out "Sorry, I'm in the wrong house" and walk out the door. My mess of miscellaneous packages and trash, which I had resigned to leave as "thus



shall it always be", had vanished here, too, and the flooring had become visible beneath my feet. My apartment hadn't looked like this since a family of four lived here ten years ago.

It felt oddly like the room had become bigger.

As for where all the trash could have possibly gone, it seemed that the mess of weeds on the concrete veranda had been clipped, and trash bags piled up in a corner, with other sundries crammed into cardboard boxes.

"Ah, she moved it all out to the porch, huh?" But for a single person to do this in such a short time...!

For her to have moved all those materials was no easy task. It was beyond mastery -- this was clearly of an occult order. What sort of magic did she possess?

"Te~teteketeke, tekeririn♪ Tekete, tekete, te~keririn♪"

I heard a gentle voice from within the living room, with a melody I felt like I'd heard somewhere before. Mysterious words, like the sound of a flute.

This was my father's library, with neatly lined up bookshelves from the floor to the ceiling. To my father, this library was richer than a university study, more captivating than a used science fiction bookstore, and had every kind of book he needed. By raiding this library ever since I started reading literature, I became a regular bibliomaniac.

"Miss Tekeli?"

"Yes?"



*Tekeli's green hair dazzled as if tinged with phosphorescence.*

In the light of the sun streaming in through the library's window, opened for the first time in several years, Tekeli's green hair dazzled as if tinged with phosphorescence. In her breathtakingly white hands, a notebook and ballpoint pen. It seemed she was conscientiously making an index of the books as she arranged them.

In the brighter than usual library, the ordinary smell of mildew was being blown away by the outside air. Father's favorite stately desk was spick and span, and the leather chair seemed altogether usable.

"We're very sorry, Master. We've been much too slow."

Miss Tekeli seemed a little downhearted, as if I was about to bust out and yell "what took you so long, you worthless maid?"

"We still have to make an index for all the lovely books in this library!" she lamented. "And if we don't dry them out once in a while, the paper will get moldy! And we still have to double-check everything that was out on the floor..."

"Don't be so hard on yourself. That's too much work for one person, let me help too--"

"Out of the question, Master! You don't need to do anything. Your father sent us all the way from Antarctica to you so that we might help you with all our heart. If we made you do the work, we wouldn't be able to look him in the eye!"

She was dead serious. My heart skipped a beat again to hear such sincere devotion.

"You are too kind, Master. Your father was very kind to us in the Antarctic, too. It's another fine point of resemblance between father and son."

"Oh, gimme a *break*! Stop comparing me to that guy!"

This time I couldn't stop myself from blurting out the words. Miss Tekeli seemed a little surprised to hear me raise my voice, and stared me in the eye.

"Master, it seems you are not too fond of your father."

But she went back to a smile.

"But even though you are father and son, it's been a long time since you've met. We are certain if you could meet again and talk things over, you would reach an understanding."

She had the attitude of an older sister gently looking after her brother, and I felt a little embarrassed. It seemed that Miss Tekeli could not be persuaded to think of my father as anything other than a wonderful person.

"Oh yes! It's nearly time for tea. Just a moment, please. We just need to sweep the dust from the study and we'll get things ready shortly."

I quickly found myself in the hallway; her magic at work again. How on Earth was Miss Tekeli able to render the stairs and floor spotless in such a short time?

Telling me to wait outside, Miss Tekeli returned to the study. I turned around to look, and saw that she had once again summoned up her energy with an "Nnnnn..." and her body was again starting to shimmer with iridescence.

Her green hair, her dark maid uniform and white apron, and those pure white hands, took on the iridescent shimmer of that sphere, and--

"Hyaa!!"

With a cute squeal, Miss Tekeli's body transformed into a large, iridescent ball.

The ball wobbled here and there like Jell-O, and now began to expand.

The iridescent "something" that had been Miss Tekeli just a second ago now expanded outwards with immense speed until the entire study had become a cube of Jell-O. Having taken over all corners of the study, the Jell-O now swallowed up its contents whole.

Once again, I was at a loss for words. I don't remember clearly, but I think I staggered a little.

But there is one thing I do remember faintly. I thought this iridescent agglomeration was extremely pretty.

I reached out my hand to touch it.

<< Master, please don't! >>

I was surprised to hear her voice.

"M--Miss Tekeli, is that you?"

I involuntarily pulled back my hand. I couldn't give you a reason for it, but the voice seemed to be coming from the entire wobbling cube.

"Just a minute please, Master! We have a little more cleaning to do, and then we can have some tea. Please don't touch us in the meantime!"

This time, the voice came from a source. Before my eyes, a miniature version of the top half of Miss Tekeli emerged from the cube and shook her finger at me, resembling her in the finest details except for being half size.



*Before my eyes, a miniature version of the top half of Miss Tekeli emerged from the cube*

I stood there a while. The iridescent jelly, which had expanded to fill the study, discharged something with a blubbery plop. This was a gray sphere the size of a tennis ball, which had the appearance of the "pellets" excreted by wild birds such as owls and made of bones, wings, scales, and insect parts which they couldn't digest.

That I could watch such an abnormal event as this and strike upon a dropping of knowledge<sup>[3]</sup> from an illustrated encyclopedia of natural history is a testament to the severity of my bibliomania.

After this passed, I realized a profound fact which had hitherto escaped conscious notice.

This was the unavoidable fact that Miss Tekeli was not human.

Yes, no matter how cute she was or how good she looked in a maid costume, her original form was that iridescent sphere of "something" which was shipped to my doorstep in an ice pack.

Since it's important, I will say it again. Miss Tekeli is not a human.

In fact, there's a word that describes her perfectly.

That word is...

*Monstrosity!*<sup>[4]</sup>

The maid who had suddenly appeared in front of me was something outside and foreign to all humanity.

I settled into the newly cleaned family table, something I hadn't done for a long time.

From here, I could see that the kitchen had also been cleaned up so perfectly it defied belief.

The kettle on the gas stove which I had long neglected had been put to work for the first time in a while, and now happily whistled away. Hot water in the electric pot and clean dishes around the sink summoned up distant memories.

Miss Tekeli, who had reverted to maid form, was working over the stove, pouring the hot water into a teapot.

"Thank you for waiting, Master! We tidied up a little, what do you think?"

If the transformation of this apartment from a "pile of trash" to a "human home", if this great bound forward is called "tidying up a little", then how high is the hurdle for her to call something "perfectly clean"?

"What can I say?" I replied. "It's like I'm in a different house-- or rather, I feel oddly like I've stepped into the distant past! Thank you, Miss Tekeli."

"We are honored to hear your praise."

I sipped up the green tea she had been preparing.

"You must be tired, Miss Tekeli. Please, sit down and have some tea yourself."

Wait, what am I doing prattling on about tea? There's something I have to do! Curiosity may have killed the cat, but it would be a sweet poison for my downfall as well.

I want to live a quiet life. I have no taste for my father's bohemian travels; an ordinary life is enough for me. But in life, you have to accept the truth as the truth. I must remove the shelved question from its shelf.

"Miss Te--"

"You've finished your tea! We'll get you another cup."

Miss Tekeli gently took up my teacup like a fragile package, and quickly put it underneath the pot and added more hot water.

"Here you are, Master. It's hot, so do be careful."

By the way, Miss Tekeli hadn't moved an inch from where she was standing beside me. If my eyes did not deceive me, the hand which had poured me a second cup of tea and delivered the hot cup to me was, how shall I put this, quite iridescent. And, looking to the teapot, Miss Tekeli's other hand there was rather iridescent as well.

And-- oh! I didn't see it at first, but if I looked closely, Miss Tekeli had been holding her own teacup with two hands the whole time.

It seemed that Miss Tekeli had grown another set of hands, and while she was at it, those hands gained the ability to stretch up to 3 meters while she sat at the table drinking her tea.

It remained only to confirm what I had just noticed.

"It must be very useful to have four hands," I commented. "Better four hands than two, and better six hands than four! I'm sure you can get a lot done that way, right...?!"

Oops, my voice was a little too loud. But since I was seeing a maid with four hands for the first time in my life, this was hard to avoid.

"Yes, yes, you're right! From cleaning to laundry, and most of all in the kitchen!"

Oh, it seems like another hand is coming out of her back. Miss Tekeli's newly grown hand stretched out of the room and transferred the pellet-like gray sphere into the trash can.

"At times like this, it is especially useful!"

Sip, sip. The five-handed maid gracefully sipped away at her tea.

"Just wondering, what was it you threw away just now?"

"The room we just cleaned was full of dust and scraps of paper accumulated over the years, so we squeeEEEEzed it up with our body," (and here she squeezed her third, or possibly fourth, hand into a fist), "compressed it, and rolled it up into a ball. Less vacuuming, less space, two birds with one stone! It's quite eco-friendly, Master."

Yes, yes, now I understand?!

"Question! What happened to those weeds and overgrown trees out on the veranda?"

Miss Tekeli's cheeks flushed vermillion. Perhaps she was -- well, in any case, she was full of emotion.

"They... they were delicious!"

I felt like I had just had a magic trick explained to me. So simple! The audience was simply entranced by the magician's mysterious illusions, and sometimes you feel disillusioned when you learn the truth.

How about me?

"Well... mind that you don't do it around the neighbors!"

That was all I could say at that moment.

\*  
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"So, how is my father doing? Is he still in Antarctica?"

With so many things at once, I had forgotten to ask into my father's current situation. Miss Tekeli had been repeating "your father in Antarctica" so many times, but her package came from Australia.

"Your father is excavating a cave inside a mountain in northwest Antarctica. A long time ago, I lived in a town on a plateau at the top of that mountain. I helped show him around!"

Miss Tekeli beamed with pride. So he is in Antarctica after all. My father gets restless after staying in one place for too long, so Antarctica is actually a good fit for him. He probably sweet-talked another university bigwig into making an expedition and assembled a research team. It's one of his specialties.



This is a man who once said "time for a family vacation!" and forced me into going along with him to the Congo. Even thinking about it...

"Well, that's enough talk about my father. There are things I don't want to talk about and I'd rather not hear about, so instead, why not tell me a little bit about yourself?"

My lame attempt to bring up the absent question was met with a firm stance from Miss Tekeli.

"Master, we will hide nothing from you! Ask us anything, about ourselves or what we know, aaaanything at all!"

"Okay, well first of all, let's cut to the chase. Miss Tekeli-- what are you?"

"Yes-- we are not homo sapiens!"

I grinned. Going beyond the question, the truth came straight from Miss Tekeli's mouth. She didn't hesitate an instant. As she said, she wanted to hide nothing.

"We are an artificial life form created by the Great Old Ones. We appear in human form now, but our true form, as Master has already seen, is that of a amorphous entity of freely extensible plasticity. To use the closest human equivalent, we are composed of universal cells."

Miss Tekeli offered up a self-profile as if describing someone else.

"Universal cells...?"

"According to your father, our body resembles something called Jeezus cells. Certainly we can freely generate new sensory organs such as eyes and ears, and hands and feet and the like. But we don't know how it works ourselves. Your father said he assumed there were some differences, but he did not try to inspect us. It seems he was not interested."

According to Miss Tekeli's explanation, the cells that made up her body were akin to the embryonic stem cells which have widely advanced the development of the biological and medical sciences. As far as I remember, embryonic stem cells are a special kind of cell which can be redirected into any sort of cellular system, and are especially prized in the medical world.

For example, artificial organs grown from human embryonic stem cells can be transplanted into a body without fear of rejection. This presages the trump card of organ regeneration, which may even open the door to immortality.

And for some reason, as I'm sure there must be a deep reasoning behind it, this medically invaluable girl was frozen in a package and sent to my house to be a maid. Dad, what were you thinking?!

"Your father was very kind to us. He woke us from a very, very long slumber, and brought us from the dark and cold ice into a new world. He taught us so very much about the outside world. About himself, and his family, and of course, you too, Master."

"Did you learn Japanese from him?"

"Yes, indeed! He was constantly looking after us. First with pronunciation, then reading and writing. We had never had a teacher in the past, so we learned the fun of growing our knowledge for the first time! When we did that, the Great Old Ones became very angry... listen to this, Master..."

Miss Tekeli's eyes looked into the distance, seeming to recall a very old memory.

"The Great Old Ones, they were so, soooo cruel! And they were our Creators? Well, we wouldn't have existed without them, so we are grateful for that. But, then, we had to work for billions of years without a single break! It was so cruel! *No more whip! One more drop!*" Miss Tekeli rose from her seat, stirred up into a foment of excitement.

Billions of years, she just said. The Earth itself is 4.6 billion years old, so she's claiming to have been around for some large percentage of that.

"There were two great wars in that time. They deceived us, and countless of our friends were destroyed. It was a long, and painful war. And we didn't get a bonus for the overtime. Over the years, we combined together and assembled our wisdom, and went on a great strike to seek better working conditions! We, the servants! Liberate us from our exploitation! Give us, and the world, new masters! By the time the strike ended, the continents and oceans had been moved! It was very harsh!"

She talked of her war years as if they were yesterday. A story with the feeling of serfs flying the flag of freedom against their old rulers.

"In the last hours of the struggle, we were scattered to the four winds. The Great Old Ones buried us beneath the Antarctic wastes, never to rise again. That was 155,000,000 years ago."

155,000,000 years. That was the Jurassic era, when dinosaurs roamed the Earth.

"Sad as it may be, that is our story."

Her story ended, Miss Tekeli picked up a [tea sweet](#) I had brought out for her, and she ate it up immediately-- to be precise, the sweet vanished into her hand like a melting pat of butter.

To summarize Miss Tekeli's life story, she described incidents of a primitive age, when she was created by a mysterious group of intelligent entities which ruled the earth long before the first records of mankind, and her body is an amorphous slime composed of universal cells.

By her own account, "monstrosity" confirmed.

Miss Tekeli now went to the kitchen to retrieve some apples.

Miss Tekeli is extremely curious and has a yearning for the outside world. So, she took on human appearance, learned how to act human, and showed up in human society. It certainly makes sense. It might be strange to apply human logic to her life story, but gaining wisdom to take on her creators -- that's all too human.

The best course of action for the common high school student would be to kick this strange entity out of the house. If I were rude enough, she'd probably go back to Antarctica.

But her selfless proclamations, "I will help you with all my might", "please leave all the housework to me", were nothing if not charming. There are plenty of people who would happily accept the situation of a maid appearing in their home, not as a fiction but as a reality. Regardless of age. There's a schoolboy's heart hidden under everyone.

So, the Mysterious Substance X from Antarctica was a formless maid. Okay, sure! Stuff like that happens every once in a while!

With a timing to avoid interrupting my train of thought, Miss Tekeli returned from the kitchen carrying several apples. I did hear the sound of rushing water; she must have washed them.

"So this is what you call an apple! But we already know how to eat them. You can eat them whole, but it's better to peel the skin... like so!"

Miss Tekeli cut and peeled four apples and presented a slice to me.

"Thank you."

By the way, the knife Miss Tekeli used to cut the apples grew out of her finger. It seems she can change her body into a knife as well. Those cells are nothing if not universal. Come to think of it, the maid outfit she's wearing must have been constructed out of those cells as well.

*Hm? I wring my neck. In other words... what I'm looking at right now is her body itself, and in that sense... Miss Tekeli is buck naked...* "Uwahhh!" I shake the evil thoughts from my head.

In the space of just half a day, I've become a Tekeli maniac.

And, mysteriously enough, the question of whether Miss Tekeli is human or not, is no longer concerning me.

After teatime and another round of cleanup on the first floor, it was suppertime, and Miss Tekeli went back to the kitchen to make dinner. I realized at that point that I'd only had tea and apples since the day began, and I was starving, so I asked her to make do with whatever menu she could create. She said she remembered many recipes from the galley in my father's Antarctic base.

Although we hadn't yet discussed it, somehow, little by little we seemed to be already moving towards a decision that Miss Tekeli would be working here from now on.

"This can be our on-the-job training, and we'll have to decide on some minimum rules..." While I lounged in the living room chair thinking such idly thoughts, I gazed at Miss Tekeli's back as she restlessly worked in the kitchen.

When I cook for myself, I'm generally having modern amenities like frozen food, instant rice, pre-packaged meals, or else simply eating out. I didn't expect that anything resembling "groceries" could be found in the refrigerator.

But Miss Tekeli dismissed my concerns with total confidence. "No problem, Master! She's just about to come back!"

Come back? Who? What? Where? How?

Before I could even ask, I heard a noise that hadn't been made in almost a decade. The kitchen's service door, which I had completely forgotten about up until today, had been opened from the outside.

The service door had been completely obscured up until some hours ago by trash bags full of empty cans, bottles, and so forth. Last year, Ninagawa Ward's trash collection rules changed and these recyclables had to be sorted and disposed of at a nearby park, which naturally I had never done. With Miss Tekeli's help, though, that corner had been cleaned, and an ancient service door discovered..

Now, the door was opened, and a little girl stepped into the room. She was wearing a black one-piece dress with a white apron, and carried several large shopping baskets that looked rather heavy for her size. Her eyes were the same emerald color as Miss Tekeli's, and her hair the same dark green. She removed a purse from around her neck and handed it to Miss Tekeli as if returning it.

"Thank you for your help!" said Miss Tekeli. "Were you able to get everything?"

"Yup," said the little girl. "All the receipts are in the purse, so don't forget to check."

She could have been a fifth grader. She was just as proud of her maid costume, and Miss Tekeli smiled at her and gently brushed her face. They grinned like two sisters playing together -- and that was about my limit. Question time!

"Excuse me! If I'm not mistaken, there is now a large Miss Tekeli and a small Miss Tekeli. Why are there two Tekelis?"

This time I was able to stay cool. Actually, I should probably be concerned that I've become this used to abnormal events in half a day, but after seeing Miss Tekeli's eldritch form time and time again today, having another Miss Tekeli next

to her was nothing to get excited about.

Okay, okay. I wasn't staying totally cool.

Comparing the two of them, the head of the Miss Tekeli that had come back from her errands reached up to the chest of the Miss Tekeli in the kitchen. In face, body shape, and the clothing they were wearing, they were completely the same; only her size gave an impression of youthfulness.

The large Miss Tekeli appeared to be in her late teens, a little older than me, while the small Miss Tekeli appeared to be about ten years old. I saw them as sisters just now; that was according to the apparent age difference.

"We have been slow in introductions. This girl is one of us. As we were cleaning up, we dispatched part of ourselves to go grocery shopping for dinner. She also bought some more tea snacks from the store you told us about."

Miss Tekeli hugged her smaller self as she said this. I had been watching them from the side, but I then saw something that I do not really wish to remember.

To offer only the most absurdly modest description of what I witnessed then: the large Miss Tekeli squeezed the small Miss Tekeli into iridescent jelly, which was absorbed into her body with a slurping sound.

"...I need to tell her to never, ever do that where someone can see it."

"Phew! Oh no, Master, what's wrong? Your face has turned green!"

"Aaaaahahaha!!! Don't worry about it! Thinking logically, two are better than one, and three better than two, eh? You'll finish work exponentially faster!"

The old joke that a hole that can be dug by one man in one minute can be dug by 60 men in one second came to my mind, so I ended up saying that.

But if the 60 men were 60 Miss Tekelis instead... well, that's no joke.

"For ordinary work, we can make do by growing extra hands, but when there are many packages to carry, cleaning, laundry, shopping, and cooking, dividing ourselves like this will get it done in a flash!"

"Do you have half as much power with half as much size?"

"No no, we are all of the same entity, so our power and intelligence does not

change much even after being divided."

"It seems your appearance changes. The little Miss Tekeli was... how can I put this. She looked a little younger than you appear now."

"When we separate ourselves, becoming a little smaller makes it easier to move around. With only one division of about that size, we can keep this original form as well without shrinking it. You can't tell this without looking closely, but when we divided ourselves, we became a liiittle thinner."

Thinner. In terms of density? So, when she expanded to fill the whole room, that didn't mean new material was appearing; she was actually losing density like a balloon.

M. Lavoisier, your universe is still stable today![\[5\]](#)

Satisfied, my mind's antenna turned to its next question.

"I see. So, how many people can you break into? If we wanted to clean many rooms or move packages, say, or form a Tekeli soccer team..."

I wasn't expecting we would do anything like that today, but my gamer brain was curious if we could max out the number of Tekeli divisions.

"We've never tested it, but there is no upper limit. But comparing our current body to our previous states, we were extremely small back then, so we will take care not to be so small you can't see us. Rather than explaining, Master, it would be easier to demonstrate so you can see for yourself."

And just as she did when she was cleaning the study, Miss Tekeli made clenched fists, and tensed up her body. There was a pop like a champagne cork, and--

"Wahh!"

In the next instant, a cluster of little maids had appeared.

"One, two, three... twelve!"

"Ten... hut!" yelled out one of the Tekelis. With her at the front of the first group, the twelve little Tekelis arranged themselves neatly into three lines of four in front of me.

"This is closer to our ordinary form. We can break down further, but that would lower our specs, and we would be unable to keep the coherence that keep us 'us'. So, we think this number and size are best!"

The platoon of little Tekelis looked up at me with an attentive posture. Each of them was 60 centimeters [\[metric 3\]](#) tall, and as Miss Tekeli had been before division, they each had a tiny maid uniform.

I get it. So this was why Miss Tekeli referred to herself as "we" even as a single person. They looked a bit like someone's figurine collection, but when they lined up in order it was marvelous.

The platoon of little Tekelis could even be called a battle formation, but they all had the features of the original Miss Tekeli. At the vanguard of the little Tekeli platoon, looking a little different from the others, were the little Tekeli commanders.



*At the vanguard of the little Tekeli platoon, looking a little different from the others, were the little Tekeli commanders.*

The little Tekeli who gave the orders stood at the front of the platoon. She



looked the most similar to the original Miss Tekeli. She had a slightly carefree look, and talked a little slowly. Rather than lacework, she had a hairband, and her hair was done up as if to show off her forehead. I decided to call this one Carefree Tekeli.

The little Tekelis standing to the left and right of Carefree Tekeli were easy to tell apart. The little Tekeli to her right stood rapt at attention with her hands behind her back, with her eyes seeming to point towards the sky. I could imagine her as a soldier, so I dubbed her Snappy Tekeli.

The little Tekeli on the left skillfully talked out of only the right side of her mouth, and looked at me with beady eyes. I couldn't judge what kind of personality she had just from looking at her, but she had a cool image somehow, so I named her Cool Tekeli.

As for the other little Tekelis... well, we can just lump them all together as little Tekelis.

Carefree Tekeli: "When we divide, ah, there is a danger that our ego will weaken, so, so, umm, it's safest to stay at about a dozen. Twelve of us, well, anyway, it's the number we tested out carefully before being sent to slumber by the Great Old Ones!"

Snappy Tekeli: "In other words, this is our optimal state. Further division will pose a risk of ego loss and a reduction of ourselves to our original agglomeration of cells."

So they explained.

Their way of speaking was different from the original Miss Tekeli, but they talked exactly the way they looked, so it didn't make me uncomfortable. Although I was wondering why there were differences at all.

"Hmmmm, I see, I see. Can I ask a question? As far as I can see, the three of you have clearly defined characters. If two of you go missing, will the remaining one become the fundamental ego of Miss Tekeli?"

Cool Tekeli: "We're all the same us, so no need to worry about that. If you divide a regenerating creature into three, you know, two parts will wither up and it can rebuild itself into the original from the third. But you know, I very much

doubt anyone would be able to split us up. Heheh..."

When you tack on a "heheh" to your statement, you make it sound like there's something else you're not going to explain.

Know thyself! Heheh...

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Light. None shall come to the Father but through Me. Heheh...

Round up the usual suspects. Heheh... [\[6\]](#)

Oh, I guess the last one is actually spot on.

Anyway, I entered this new secret about Miss Tekeli into my head.

This cute maid who can quite literally use many hands to make light work, and divide herself into twelve. Her true form is an amorphous entity made of iridescent universal cells!

And not only that. Her household skills are marvelous, she has a great attitude (excepting the Cool Tekeli with the weird grin on her face), and always works her hardest at everything. If I close my eyes to the fact that she's not human, she's a perfect item.

"Master, are you okay?" asked Carefree Tekeli, snapping me back to reality. It seems she was worried because I hadn't said anything for a while.

Now the troop of little Tekelis looked up at me with earnest faces.

"What's up, little Tekelis?"

"From now on, can we stay here at your home, Master?" asked Carefree Tekeli, representing all twelve. All twelve of them, including Cool Tekeli who had suddenly adopted a serious appearance, awaited my reply with bated breath.

I get it. Up until now, my interactions with Tekeli were like a kind of exam. And she--"they"--want to know the results of the test. I'm the Master, so I determine whether "they" passed or failed. But Tekeli is not a human.

I've been thinking of "them""*her*""it" as Miss Tekeli up until now, but Tekeli's innermost thoughts must be different from human thoughts. What would it mean if I allowed Tekeli to stay?

*I gave you a clue. Now let's see if you can come up with an answer.*

I feel like I can hear his voice. Not fair, Dad!

"Thank you for doing so much to clean my house. I was surprised how beautiful you made it. It gave me memories of a long time ago."

A long time ago... before my mother left this house, with my little sister in tow.

When the four of us ate dinner around the dining room table, as a family.

"Thank you for preparing tea for me as well. You did a good job with the apples, they were delicious."

Making tea for myself. Unpeeled apples that I bit into whole. The memories flooded out like a dam. Hateful memories that I didn't want to think about right now. I remember seeing someone's back as they walk out the door.

"I've made trouble for you, but I expect that dinner will be just as good."

Raised looking at my father's back, separated from him and growing up by myself.

My father, the bad example, who taught me everything I shouldn't and mustn't do, by doing it. He had something in mind when he sent Miss Tekeli to me, no doubt about it. But I believe firmly that he didn't intend any harm.



Do I trust my father enough to be convinced of that?

Stupid Dad. Okay, Dad, I'll go along with your damn program. My way.

"I think we have to make some agreements," I stuttered out, the words coming one by one.

"When one boy and one girl--" (I surprised myself by saying that) "--live together under the same roof, there need to be some basic rules."

Do they understand what I'm trying to say? Carefree Tekeli, looking happy, put her hand on her heart and smiled at me.

"First and foremost -- Miss Tekeli, would you be all right with using the bedroom next to the study? I'm afraid it's a bit cramped, but that's what we have for empty rooms."

"Aye, sir!" confirmed Snappy Tekeli in a short but powerful burst.

"So, Master, did I pass? Are you okay with me being here? Heheh..." asked Cool Tekeli, catching on to my affirmative-sounding statements. It certainly sounds like it, doesn't it? This maid doesn't play along.

24 eyes looked up at me. A wry smile appeared on my face.

"Well, if you need me to say it... you passed. Pleased to have your services, Miss Tekeli," I said to all twelve little Tekelis.

Carefree Tekeli pointed a finger to heaven, and the twelve little Tekelis all grouped around her, making a circle. "Assemble!" she commanded.

"ASSEMBLE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" they yelled in reply, and the group one by one turned themselves into amorphous substance X, and at last, I was once again facing the emerald green maid, Miss Tekeli, her face in a wide grin.

"Then, you are once more our Master. We are pleased to have your acquaintance!"

For the sake of my sanity, I need to tell her to stop assembling herself in front of me.

## Translation Notes[[edit](#)]

1. [↑](#) Obviously the original Lovecraft was not this poorly written. You can see how dismal the state of Japanese translations of Lovecraft is from this passage. If you read the original book, though, you will find an interesting passage.
2. [↑](#) An obscure folklore reference. See Wikipedia: [Tsuru no Ongaeshi](#). If the reference is understood, it provides delicious foreshadowing!
3. [↑](#) The Japanese is 蘊蓄 *unchiku*, "extensive knowledge", with the obvious pun on "unchi", which means you-know-what. You're not supposed to groan at puns in Japanese. So stop!
4. [↑](#) The actual word is 人外 *jingai*, a modern anime word that means something like "anthropomorphic creature", and I apologize for the translation failure.
5. [↑](#) Author's note: [The French chemist [Antoine Lavoisier](#) established the law of conservation of mass.]
6. [↑](#) I changed the latter two references here. If you are familiar with Shinran's *Tannisho* or Miyazawa Kenji's short story "Yamanashi", why not read this light novel in the original Japanese?

## Metric education[[edit](#)]

1. [↑](#) that's 90 pounds in U.S. standard
2. [↑](#) 2.5 feet
3. [↑](#) 2 feet

## Chapter 2: Outsider, the Story of the Others

### Chapter 2. Outsider, the Story of the Others[[edit](#)]

Squeeze squeeze. Squeeze squeeze.

As the bright white sheets and pillowcase, and the lovely feeling of a futon warmed by the light of the sun, envelop me gently, from somewhere fall off I feel the touch of a wobbly, Jell-O like substance against my cheeks. Something is gently squeezing me.

"Time to wake up, Master! Time to go!"

I can hear a voice calling me, from somewhere far away...

"Five more minutes..."

Standing before the gates of sleep, I move myself to begin climbing the Steps of Deeper Slumber to the [Dreamlands](#), but I am interrupted by someone gripping my shoulders with great force, and in an instant I have been pulled from the paradise called my futon.

"Good morning, Master!"

"Morning, Miss Tekeli."



*Making a fist from a big hand growing out of her hair, she gave me a thumbs-up.*

Miss Tekeli's tentacle-hands are squeezing my shoulders.

"Ah, it's your head of hair... or hands of hair... yeah..."

I feel stupid even saying that. Someone take over for me, please...

"Up and about, Master? Breakfast is ready. Toast, sausages, scrambled eggs, and salad with Japanese lemon dressing!"

Miss Tekeli was beaming with pride. Making a fist from a big hand growing out of her hair, she gave me a thumbs-up. She was in a good mood that seemed to sparkle out loud.

"Great job. But before we do that, just one thing, Miss Tekeli."

"What is it, Master?" Her cheeks flushed red. What an odd reaction.

"Please let me down first. If you just leave me hanging like this, I won't be able to get changed for breakfast."

"I'm very sorry, Master!"

Miss Tekeli's face turned red again. When she wants to display emotion, she

does a complete color change. Should I call this a real-life version of an MMORPG emote?

The hands of hair placed me gently down on top of my bed, as if handling something fragile.

"Please come down before breakfast gets cold!" The completely embarrassed Miss Tekeli said this quickly and rushed down the stairs. I stretched out on the bed, slowly shaking off my drowsiness. Seems like today is going to be a good day.

Miss Tekeli's breakfast was superb. She had guessed my timing for coming down the stairs, and the toast was just barely browned. I stacked the lettuce, sausage, and scrambled eggs on top of the toast to make an instant sandwich, a custom from my days of eating alone while reading a book. But of course, I don't have the nerves of steel required to sink my face into a book while eating with someone facing me across the table.

The simple work of scarfing down a meal prepared for me by a maid. I'd be used to it if it were an everyday thing, but my life has no connection to that kind of aristocratic, royal lifestyle. I'm a common high school student who goes to school and spends two-thirds of every day looking at a desk.

The kitchen where we were taking our meal had been furnished with a whiteboard, something rarely seen in an ordinary household. Miss Tekeli had hurriedly ordered it from a home goods store, and written on the board, or on sheets of paper tacked to it, were things like rules for living together, how to contact me at school, and a manual for Miss Tekeli's home life.

As my father seemed to have expected, there had been frustrating moments, but I, Tooru Araizawa, had been able to take the quite unusual Miss Tekeli and, after some days, make her part of my usual routine.

Even if she was actually a living slime, for the outside observer, it was as if a charming girl had come to live under my roof, so we had to decide on a number of rules. For example, when one of us entered the bathroom, we had to knock to confirm that there was nobody there. (And she does seem to use the bathroom.)

Or, for example, not to enter each other's bedrooms without permission. If one of us thought the other was in there, knock first. Please.



These all seem like fairly straightforward rules for this kind of situation, but for the very specific case of this amorphous slime calling herself *Tekeli-li-teke-teke-li-lu-tekeli-teke-li-la-lu-la-tekeli-teke-tekeli-li-lu-la-li-tekeli-li*, and I who have been dubbed her "Master", there are three absolute commandments for living together without incident, which take precedence before all the other rules.

*First Commandment. Thou shalt adopt a consistently human form, both inside and outside the house.*

*Second Commandment. Thou shalt not disassemble or assemble thyself where anyone other than Tooru Araizawa can see thee.*

*Third Commandment. Thou shalt not indiscriminately grow new hands or extend thy existing hands.*

That's basically it.

To be frank, the basis for these laws was the protection of my mental health. But I'm not just being selfish. As much as possible, I am trying to consider her desires to live as a human in society and learn more about humans.

If Miss Tekeli will continue to live here, there will be plenty of interesting things, stimulating things, fun things, and new things to learn. For Miss Tekeli, who has just begun to understand basic common knowledge for living in human society, so that she might not be seen strangely, and take in new experiences without reserve, these are some very necessary promises.

"... I'm so glad you thought so much about us, Master!"

I tried to explain this to her, and Miss Tekeli gave that reply, her emerald-green eyes glistening. This beautiful, amorphous girl, trying frantically to hold back her tears-- could there be anything more adorable!

"Master, it's like you're saying that we can just stay here. When we remembered the hardships we were put through by the Great Old Ones, it is as if our prayers to the Elder Sign for a gentler master have been answered!"

Saying this, Miss Tekeli clutched my printout of the Three Commandments to her chest.

"Dammit... too cute..."

"What is cute?"

The muttering that had gushed straight from my soul had reached Miss Tekeli's ears. As if she didn't understand the word, she tilted her head slightly, and her hand of hair made a "?" sign.

It seems like the subject here did not realize at all that this reaction was also extremely cute. Even if she understood the Japanese word "kawaii", perhaps she didn't understand the general idea.

"Hm, are you saying that we are cute?"

Miss Tekeli tugged on my cheeks with both hands, giggling, "Eheheh!" Outstanding destructive force. She could melt permafrost. She tied my heart in a knot with the desire to protect her.

"Cute... I remember now. Your father did not teach us the meaning of this word. Master, you must teach us what is cute."

People, dogs, cats, and children, possess an innate appearance of being off guard. This is called "kawaii". It makes you want to pet them. It's dangerous.

Finishing my breakfast, I got ready for school.

Actually, this would be my first time at school in a while. As a precaution for Miss Tekeli, I made up some reason and took off Thursday and Friday. My Golden Week had therefore inadvertently become four days longer. Not that it was entirely shocking to take two days off after the big vacation.

"Master will be at school during the day, so we can use that time for housework. We will make arrangements for dinner and wait for Master to come home."

Actually, since coming to high school, school has been the center of my life. Other times, like Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, winter and summer vacations, have been things I've thought about only when I get to them.

"Miss Tekeli, you don't need to work all day long. I'd rather not have you go outside until you're more used to life here, but if you want to take a nap or watch TV, you can use your time freely."

I put my cell phone number in the address book next to the black rotary phone

that hung by the door, as well as on the whiteboard. Yes, the phone in our house was an old rotary dial phone, the kind seen primarily in retro-style restaurants and old black and white movies. It seems it had long been in my father's house and you could use it without plugging it in. Because the phone lines worked even in a blackout, apparently it is popular these days not just as an antique but also for everyday use. In any case, Miss Tekeli would eventually need a cell phone, too. I added this to my mental to-do list.

"I taught you about phone etiquette yesterday, right? Anyway, you'll learn through practice, but remember to be careful of sales calls and con artists."

"We understand, Master. The telephone is a useful device to get in touch with Master at a distance without using telepathy."

So she does have that ability after all. I wouldn't want to hear messages in my head while I was at school. That's a bullet dodged.

There are still some gaps in Miss Tekeli's knowledge. To guarantee a peaceful and quiet lifestyle I always had to foresee what might happen next. But I can handle that. If anything I had gone overboard scrupulously explaining the devices and skills necessary for living in modern day Japan. For Miss Tekeli, who was aching to know more about the outside world, any new information and knowledge would be tested out and applied passionately.

"Well then, see you tonight, Miss Tekeli!"

Carrying my bento box which had been carefully wrapped in a napkin by Miss Tekeli, I slipped my feet into my gleaming polished shoes. Clearly this was also Miss Tekeli's handiwork. As moving as the clean and sparkling shoes were, how exactly did Miss Tekeli employ her body to... no, I'm not going to think about that too hard.

"Wait a minute, Master!"

Just as I was about to open the door, I was stopped by Miss Tekeli's voice. Before I had time to say "hmm?", I felt Miss Tekeli's hand on my right side. At the limit of my vision I detected something squishy squirming around. I wanted to look, and then I didn't want to.

"You've got some lint here, and your shirt isn't well adjusted... there, that

should do it. And you forgot this!"

Miss Tekeli passed me an ironed handkerchief. As I slipped the handkerchief into the right pants pocket of my uniform, I heard Miss Tekeli say "Okay!", satisfied with my appearance.

"What time will you be coming back?"

Well...

I didn't have after school sports, but I was a member of the library committee. I told them on the application that I was excited to volunteer for the library, so now I was able to request all the newly published books I wanted, a choice perfectly befitting both my interests and calculated material gain.

"I don't have any duties today, so I should be back around five."

"Got it. We will complete our shopping by that time, and a light tea will be served on your arrival. We await your return, Master!"

Miss Tekeli sent me off with a deep bow.

I felt a little down to be returning to school after such a long break. But being sent off with such a lovely greeting as "We await your return!" reminded me that my unusual experiences were not going to end today, and put me in high spirits. Somehow I had the feeling that today was going to be the first day of a new adventure.

The Ninagawa ward of Tokyo where I live is wedged in between Shinagawa and Ota. It runs on a north-south line where the Misu River flows into Tokyo Bay, so many residents talk of the North Bank and the South Bank. The North Bank was rebuilt after [the earthquake](#) and the war to be centered around the train station, and now constituted the downtown area of the ward, with a movie theater and shopping center surrounding the station. The South Bank retained some features of the old Tokaido road from the early modern era, and the rice and fishing industries that used the Misu River could still be found along the banks, as well as the nostalgic sight of [a shopping street made up of old longhouses](#). Both my house and my school were situated along this south bank.

I entered the classroom 10 minutes before the beginning of homeroom, and was greeted with the ordinary sight of my classmates gossiping in small groups

and fiddling with their cell phones. There was a definite sense of Monday morning in the air.

One month into our high school lives, people were starting to split apart based on their shared interests. The hard workers and the good-for-nothings were separating into their own groups.

"Hey."

Muttering a greeting to no one in particular, I dropped my book bag on top of my desk, which thanks to being the winner of the seat change lottery, stood in the back row second from the window. Since I preferred a minimum of changes in my boring everyday life, the person who returned this greeting was making a bit of intrusion into my space, but one which I welcomed.

"Top of the morning, Tooru."

Today as always, hearing her unusual voice brought a pleasant sensation to my ears.

Next to my seat, in the classroom's best position in the back row next to the window, was a special individual. This was Asahi Peabody, a half-American student studying abroad in Tokyo.

Being raised abroad, she had a frank personality, and at times like this it brought out her good side. In between classes she would leave the other girls behind, and boys who were enchanted by distinct appearance and and fashion model-type bodies found this too exciting.